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The President's Daily Brief

25 March 1970

46

~~*Top Secret*~~

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

25 March 1970

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

[redacted] Cambodia [redacted] 50X1 50X1
[redacted]
(Page 1)

The opposing forces in Laos have made no major moves in the past 24 hours. *(Page 2)*

The terrorists in the Dominican Republic and the government seem ready to negotiate. *(Page 3)*

The Soviet [redacted] 50X1
[redacted] *(Page 4)* 50X1

[redacted] 50X1
[redacted] *(Page 5)* 50X1

[redacted] 50X1
[redacted] South Vietnam. *(Page 6)* 50X1

Willy Brandt may deny it, but his visit to Erfurt has evoked demonstrations and vandalism by East German youth. *(Page 7)*

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CAMBODIA

Intercepted Cambodian military messages report the continuing presence of sizable numbers of Communist troops in the southeastern border province of Svay Rieng. One message indicated that these troops are on alert and are being reinforced. Cambodian units claim that they are too weak to move against these concentrations.

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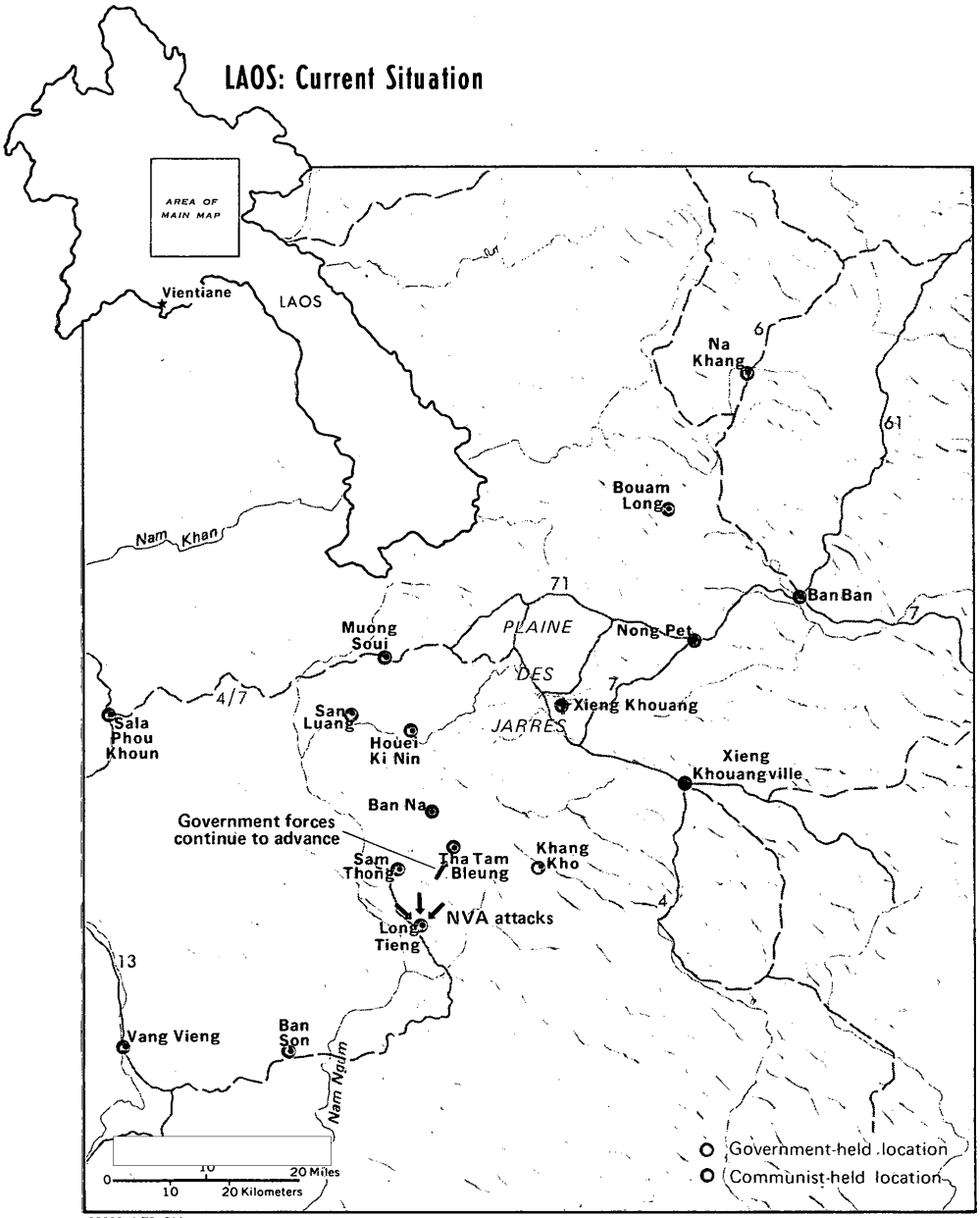

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LAOS

The Communists continue to squeeze Long Tieng, but Vang Pao's forces have turned back most of the probes sent against the outpost positions on the high ground overlooking the base. One such outpost was overrun yesterday but recaptured.

Tha Tam Bleung was the target of some counter-moves by Vang Pao's troops yesterday. [redacted] 50X1 government guerrillas are moving toward it in an effort to reduce the Communist pressure on Long Tieng.

These seesaw movements are not really indicative of the relative strengths of the contending forces. The Communists are moving slowly because they lack a secure supply line into the Long Tieng region, and they probably will refrain from a direct assault on Long Tieng until such time as they believe they can achieve a quick victory. Vang Pao, for his part, is continuing his tested strategy of inflicting maximum casualties on the attackers while minimizing his losses.

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DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Yesterday's kidnaping of Lt. Col. Donald J. Crowley, US air attaché, presumably was carried out by members of the Communist Dominican Popular Movement (MPD), the most terroristic of the several Communist factions. The kidnapers have demanded the release by 1000 today of the MPD secretary general, who was captured by the government in January, and more than 20 other prisoners.

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With elections coming up in May, the kidnaping will add further fuel to opposition charges that the government is unable to maintain order. Recent weeks have been marked by considerable violence on the part of both the Communists and the military, and continued clashes between civilians and police. The latest incident is likely to be particularly unsettling to President Balaguer, who must announce his candidacy this week if he is to run for re-election.

At press time we were informed that a meeting between spokesmen for the government and for the kidnapers was then in session.

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USSR

We noted in The President's Daily Brief of 18 March that [redacted] Soviet preparations for a large-scale naval exercise in the Mediterranean. Yesterday, the new helicopter carrier Leningrad made its first passage through the Bosporus, accompanied by two Kashin-class missile frigates. The Leningrad's sister ship, the Moskva, has been in the Mediterranean for several months. There are now 27 surface combat ships in the Mediterranean--most of them in the eastern portion--plus 13 submarines and assorted auxiliaries. [redacted]

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Soviet naval strength in the Mediterranean normally reaches its highest level during the spring and summer months. The current buildup--the most powerful force ever assembled there by the Soviets--may also be intended as a show of strength timed to coincide with increased Soviet military deliveries to Egypt.

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SOUTH VIETNAM

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NORTH VIETNAM

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EAST GERMANY

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[redacted]

[redacted] Willy Brandt prefers to deny that his visit to Erfurt brought to the surface any animosity to Ulbricht's government among the East Germans. However, the trip to Erfurt has sparked demonstrations that continued throughout East Germany from 19 March--the date of his visit--until at least 22 March.

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More than 140 people have been arrested on political charges since Brandt and Stoph met. For Ulbricht's followers, the most disturbing factor may be that most of those arrested were young people from officially sponsored youth or labor organizations. Thus, they could not be shrugged off as "hooligans."

The party politburo met on 20 March in a special session to evaluate the "breakdown" in Erfurt; it was still deliberating on 23 March. As in the past, the East Germans probably will find political scapegoats and tighten security. In the longer run, with the many instances of public dissension in mind, the East German leaders could decide that it will be too risky for them to invite Brandt to return to East Germany.

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NOTE

Italy: Prime Minister - designate Mariano Rumor probably will be able to form a new center-left government. The four parties of his coalition are now bargaining over the allocation of ministerial and other posts. Having escaped the need to prepare for elections, parliament can continue work on a variety of partially enacted economic, administrative, and social reforms.

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